

standing crops. Their food in the forest consists of the pods, leaves, and fruit of Garjan (*Rhizophora conjugata*), Goran (*Cerriops* spp.), Golpata (*Nipa fruticans*), Baen (*Avicennia alba*), Bhaila (*Azzeria bijuga*), Gengwa (*Excaecaria agallocha*), etc. The fruit and leaves of Keora (*Sonneratia apetala*), however, constitute the principal fodder for the monkeys, and are shared with Spotted Deer (*Axis axis*), which feed on the leaves and fruits dropped by the monkeys. Further, their vigilance and alarm calls save the deer from predators. We have found the monkeys eating crabs, which are commonly seen in the puddles of water during the ebb tide. We have not seen them catching fish, although local fishermen report that they catch fish. Mushrooms are also included in their menu. Water is obtained by licking dew deposited on leaves, and by eating succulent leathery leaves and long juicy grasses growing on the river flats.

The taxonomic status of the Sunderban Rhesus is not definite. Anderson (1872) referred to a specimen from the Sunderbans as a supposed new monkey, and Khajuria (1954, p. 113) while listing them under the nominate race pointed out that they differ in texture and coloration. The authors observed that in life the Rhesus in the Sunderbans is duller as compared with those from other parts of West Bengal. The orange-red fur on its loins and rump is rather inconspicuous.

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
INDIAN MUSEUM,
CALCUTTA 13,
September 15, 1964.

AJIT KUMAR MUKHERJEE
SUMIT GUPTA

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2. WILD DOGS (*CUON ALPINUS*) AND VILLAGE DOGS

We reached our land by Sigur River in the lower plateau of the Nilgiris late in the evening on 31-10-1964. There was a herd of cheetal about 100 yards away. Seeing us they stopped grazing and looked at the car curiously in typical cheetal fashion. As we were

watching them from the car, three sambar hinds made their appearance. They were trotting looking behind every now and then. Soon a fawn came into view and, on its trail, a pack of dogs—two wild dogs in front, then two pi-dogs, and behind them following at a leisurely pace half a dozen wild dogs. The leading dogs were closing in when I decided to intervene.

The cheetal had fled by this time, but the mother sambar stopped and the fawn took shelter by its mother's side. The other two hinds halted a few paces away and looked on. When the two wild dogs rushed to seize the fawn its mother, who could have used her fore feet with effect, did nothing of the kind but walked up to meet the attack with out-stretched neck, as if to say 'Take me, but please leave the kid alone'.

By this time I was within effective shot gun range, and one wild dog seeing me turned and ran to join its companions which were standing some distance away watching me. The other was quite oblivious of my presence. The pi-dogs dashed about barking and trying to help in the hunt. Holding my shot till I got a chance, I fired at the wild dog. It fell, got up, and ran towards the jungle.

At the report all the wild creatures except the fawn dispersed, but the pi-dogs rushed in to the attack. They knocked the fawn down and worried it, but a few well-aimed stones made them let go. I went up to the fawn which was wet and shivering but otherwise unhurt. My wife and daughter joined me and we stood it on its feet and massaged it. It became quite frisky after a while and we let it go to join its family, while I stood by to keep the dogs from having another try.

The pi-dogs also went away after some time. But I doubt if they re-joined the wild dog pack as it had become quite dark by then. As it rained heavily throughout the night I could not recover the wounded dog.

The wild dogs did not seem to object to the two pi-dogs joining in the hunt. But would they have accepted the pi-dogs at the 'kill'?

Whether the pi-dogs, which we discovered later to belong to neighbouring *patti* (cattle kraal), joined in the middle of the hunt or were with the wild dog pack right from the start I am unable to say. They certainly did not join near the end of the hunt, for when we passed the *patti* on our way to our land the dogs were not there.

On 13-12-1964, in the same locality, I came across another instance of wild dogs and village dogs hunting together. It was about 3 in

the afternoon when we heard a scream from the river. It sounded like a dog in distress. The scream was repeated and I ran towards it. Half way, I met some men, one of them a Game Watcher of the Nilgiri Wild Life Association, and they told me that a wild dog and a pi-dog were attacking a sambar fawn and it was the deer that was making the noise.

When I got to the spot, the young deer was in the middle of a pool and the pi-dog standing guard on a rock projecting into the pool. The wild dog had decamped. On seeing us, the fawn attempted to get out, but the dog jumped in and attacked. When it tried to seize the fawn a second time, I shot it dead. The fawn had a raw patch on the inside of its right hind thigh but was otherwise all right and limped away. It was a little bigger than the first fawn we rescued and was probably the same animal!

The Game Watcher told me that he has seen wild dogs and village dogs hunting together, but once the kill is made the wild dogs take complete charge and only after they have had their fill are the pi-dogs permitted anywhere near the kill.

On 1-1-1964 a friend and I saw and photographed some wild dogs on the banks of the Moyar hydro-electric channel about 5 miles away from the scene of action described above. One of the dogs had a distinct white patch of hair on its throat, indicating mixed blood. It would be interesting to observe whether the wild dogs mate with their domesticated brethren.

THE NILGIRI WILD LIFE ASSOCIATION,
OOTACAMUND, S. INDIA,
December 23, 1964.

E. R. C. DAVIDAR

[Cases of association between wild dogs and pariah dogs have been reported previously (e.g., 1951, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 50 : 163). It would be interesting to have particulars of known cases of interbreeding.—EDS.]

3. BREEDING OF THE INDIAN WILD ASS *EQUUS* *HEMIONUS KHUR* LESSON IN CAPTIVITY

I write to report the birth of an Indian Wild Ass, *Equus hemionus khur* Lesson, 1827, on 13 August 1964, in the Maharaja Fatesingh Zoo at Baroda. As you are aware, this species is on the list of rare